



WASATCH COUNTY COURT HOUSE
& JAIL
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The Wasatch County Court House constructed between 1878 and 1882. In the background is the County Jail.

Utah became a state. All county offices became elected positions, and included the following:

Three commissioners, two with four-year terms and one with a two-year term; county clerk, recorder, auditor, treasurer, assessor, attorney, and surveyor, all four-year terms. The offices of clerk, recorder and auditor were later combined in 1899.

Probate judges who served until statehood included Judge Witt, 1862-1868; Abram Hatch, 1868-1874; Thomas H. Giles, 1874-1884; Thomas S. Watson, 1884-1894; William S. Willes, 1894-1896.

Selectmen who served in the era prior to statehood included Thomas Todd, James Duke, John H. Van Wagoner, Sidney Epperson, Henry McMullin Sr., D. A. Sessions, David Van Wagoner, John McDonald, John W. Witt, William H. Nuttall, H. L. Anderson, John Watkins, Abram Hatch, William McDonald, George W. Clyde, Alva J. Alexander, Joseph R. Murdock, Harmon Cummings, John Clyde, Charles I. Bronson, John A. Mecham, Wilford Van Wagoner and Isaac O. Wall.

Probate judges and selectmen held many of their early meetings in the old LDS Tithing Office, a sandstone building on Main Street and First North. Later a County Court House was proposed and on March 4, 1878, the south half of the public square was selected as the court house site. Thomas H. Giles and Abram Hatch were appointed to direct the erection of the building.

Records of the construction work are incomplete, but work apparently was underway by June since the records show authorization to pay claims of contractors as of June 3, 1878. On September 2, 1878, authorization was granted by the selectmen for borrowing necessary funds to finish at least one room of the building, but work apparently lagged as construction was still being recorded in the minutes on March 8, 1880.

By September 6, 1880, the court house committee reported to the selectmen that expenditures totaled \$3,793.66. Work was apparently completed by September of 1882 when costs were reported at about \$4,600, plus \$250 for furniture. Further records show installation of a safe in 1886, landscaping in 1889 and then additional construction and remodeling to the building's present condition in 1924.

From the beginning, selectmen had many problems to solve. Roads had to be located, bridges built, rights of property safeguarded and money collected to meet expenses. This latter tax often proved the most difficult. One entry in the minutes of the selectmen reads as follows:

"The assessor reports, taxes assessed. Collected, \$147.18. Taxes past due \$327.23." The minutes of the next session tersely states: "A new assessor and collector was appointed."

Other problems facing the selectmen included requests for help in repairing or replacing bridges damaged or destroyed by flood waters, called for fence viewers to determine correct property lines, petitions to